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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VA BHHCS Hoptel open for business

Volunteers who donated to the VA Black Hills Health Care System (BHHCS) “Hoptel” – a free, temporary, overnight housing unit for Veterans undergoing treatment at the Fort Meade VA Medical Center – had a chance to tour the housing unit for the first time, on October 17.



Larry Rounsevell (left) of the Fort Meade American Legion VA Voluntary Service, Chuck Ward of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States, and Diane Ward of the South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Ladies Auxiliary pose in the living room of the VA Black Hills Health Care System Hoptel. They were some of the volunteers who graciously donated towards this new Veterans service.

“We just want to help get the Veterans what they need,” Diane Ward of the South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Ladies Auxiliary said. This service organization donated a coffee pot, toaster, patio set and paper products to the new Hoptel.

Many VA BHHCS Veterans must travel more than 50 miles to the Medical Center and free, temporary lodging can be a true haven. Some Veterans may stay for weeks, receiving chemotherapy or radiation for their cancer. Others stay for the night to ensure their timely arrival for tests or surgery the next day.

In December 2010, VA BHHCS received funding for the conversion of a four-bedroom quarters building on the Fort Meade campus into a Veterans’ Hoptel – transitory, overnight

lodging for Veterans undergoing treatment at the Fort Meade campus, with one bedroom reserved for women Veterans and their attendants, spouses or children, as appropriate.

On September 4, the temporary lodging unit opened its doors, ensuring Veterans already concerned about their health, finances and transportation do not have to worry about where they will sleep.

“When we hear of a need like this for Veterans and their families, we spread the word. We’re happy when we can help,” Larry Rousnsevell of the Fort Meade American Legion VA Voluntary Service said. The American Legion donated a microwave and paper products to the Hoptel.

The Hoptel includes a bed, bath, linen, soap and towels and access to a central food preparation and dining area. Lodging can be provided when a patient has an appointment and, as a result of irregular shuttles or inclement weather, the Veteran’s tests or exams are not scheduled until the following work day or reporting of tests cannot be completed prior to appointment. Veterans who must travel more than 50 miles to the Fort Meade VA Medical Center are eligible for lodging.

Since the Hoptel opened, it has consistently been at least 75 percent full.

The VA BHHCS volunteers who donated to the Hoptel enjoyed getting a peek at the temporary housing unit that has been helping so many Veterans.

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